

of a mother? In this strange symphony of our human life the minor and the major keys are twined together, and life passes from the one to the other with transition so rapid as to be bewildering. Did you ever think that the highest expression of joy is a tear, and the highest expression of sorrow is a tear?

The Master's Touch

In the still air the music lies unheard;
In the rough marble beauty hides unseen:
To make the music and the beauty needs
The master's touch, the sculptor's chisel keen.
Great Master, touch us with Thy skillful hand;
Let not the music that is in us die.
Great Sculptor, hew and polish us; nor let,
Hidden and lost, Thy form within us lie!
Spare not the stroke! do with us as Thou wilt!
Let there be naught unfinished, broken, marred;
Complete Thy purpose, that we may become
Thy perfect image, Thou our God and Lord!
—Horatius Bonar.

Begin the Day With God

Fireside Readings.

"Go to his Word first of all. The best and freshest news is there. Take this as a daily portion, before newspapers, sensational telegrams, and lying vanities have absorbed your heart and mind. A daily diet of love stories, war stories, strifes, political dissensions and disputes, leaves the child of God with an empty heart and a lean soul. Nor can religious sensationalism, and flowers of eloquence and rhetoric sustain a Christian life; these are but husks for the hungry; only God's Word can refresh and sustain his little ones. Each day may be your last. Begin it wisely if you would end it right."

Secret Prayer

H. L. H., in Readings for Leisure Moments.

Secret prayer has its secret reward. True, the Father, who seeth in secret, rewards the prayerful openly; but into the secret hearts of devout and prayerful men God pours his richest blessings and his purest peace. They have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. They know that God is near; and that he is a Savior and a friend. And as the worldly heart knoweth its own bitterness, so the believing heart has an unknown joy which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which no stranger can disturb or intermingle with.

Christian, you need the outward answer to believing prayer; but you also need the inward blessing that it brings, and that it is.

Be of Good Cheer

Selected.

It is useless to be disheartened because things do not go just as you would like to have them. Murmuring does not cure troubles. A disagreeable face will not alter a disagreeable fact. Try to extract some grain of comfort out of your adversities. Never despair; under whatever circumstances be cheerful, and hope on in the darkest hour. There is nothing so philosophical as a smile. A merry heart is the height of wisdom,—it doeth good like medicine.

The greatest part of our griefs will disap-

pear when viewed through the lenses of cheerfulness. Let the dark past sink out of sight. Triumph in the Lord. Look toward the sunrise. Shout in the midst of shadows as if you saw the dawn kissing the hills. Fill your soul with the visions of morning and the song of the lark. Then all will become suffused with daylight—all the gloomy places will pulse with sunshine, the clammy rocks will glisten with dew.

Would you like to know the key to unlock the doorway to a happy life? It is cheerfulness; and if earth has nothing to bring you joy you can still "rejoice in the Lord" and "rejoice evermore."

Our Bible School

THE BOOK OF JONAH—No. 3

D. C. MOOMAW

In our last we left Jonah asleep "down in the sides of the ship." A rude awakening awaited him. The storm of divine wrath had gathered and burst on the ill starred vessel. The mariners, with marked fidelity to the human instinct, the conscious subordination to the supernatural, had exhausted every resource of prayer to their gods, suddenly remembered their strange passenger and rushed down to his quarters to obtain his help to save themselves from the seeming impending destruction.

The fearful din of the tempest, the alarmed shouting of the frightened seamen, and the writhings of a guilty conscience were incidents that greeted the waking prophet.

"Get up and pray," was the first suggestion of the shipmaster. We know nothing of the personal piety of those heathen seamen, but, following the natural instinct, the sense of immediate dangers *drove* them to prayer. How little, in that respect, has mankind changed in all the intervening ages since. The same scenes are repeated now under similar conditions. Whether on the sea or land the appearance of danger is the first and only call to prayer that the multitudes of mankind heed.

The history does not say whether Jonah prayed or not. The supposition is he did not. It is certain he did not pray for divine guidance when he started *down* to Tarshish, and, having failed to invoke an infallible guide, he doubtless concluded he had no right to expect disenthralment from impending trouble.

Some action must be taken to save themselves, and following a custom universally prevalent at that period, and extant yet in many parts of the world, they "cast lots" to see for whose cause the calamity was upon them. Many people believe, in this age, that trouble is the result of divine displeasure because of sin. It is a relic from the ages of superstition. An old sister once suffered a trifling temporal adversity, and exclaimed in a spasm of fretfulness, "I don't know what I have done that the Lord has sent this judgment on me."

The test, however, permissible at that day,

because of the peculiar relations between God and humanity, was successful in locating the offending party, and the fateful black bean or whatever was used in the trial was found in Jonah's hand. There was doubtless, no sort of surprise in Jonah's mind at the result of the ceremony. He was fully conscious of the cause of the raging elements. The wonder at his want of candor in not expressing his convictions earlier in the case. Later he avowed his conviction that "for his sake the great tempest was on them."

When the sin had been found out, and we may be equally sure "our sins will find us out," the mariners were greatly perplexed and they immediately addressed a series of questions to Jonah about his people and his country. Jonah's reply was ingenious and and explicit and comprehended a confession and declaration of his faith in the one only true God. "I fear the Lord, the God of heaven," was his sententious reply. No time at that critical moment to talk about genealogy, or business, or country.

God and religion are the only interesting topics that concern a person doomed to the grave, as Jonah was. There was a rich vein of sympathy and kindness in the hearts of those rude, heathen seamen and they were loth to punish the author of their misfortune. They, with the highest consideration of the claims of humanity, submitted the decision of the awful penalty to the unhappy victim himself. His hapless, forlorn condition had most deeply moved them and they made him the arbiter of his own fate.

"What shall we do to thee that the sea may be calm unto us?" was a thrilling question to the ear and heart of the ill starred prophet. "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea," was the instant and explicit reply. There was no shirking from the penalty of his sin, no suggestion that they should make one more heroic effort to reach a landing, no repining at his seeming hard fate. Like a prophet of a thousand years later, he thought it better that one man should die than the whole company should perish. A conspicuous act of moral heroism is mentioned in verse 13, chapter 1. "Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but they could not." The divine decree had been issued by the prophet victim and no human device or effort could thwart it. Man is too feeble to appear omnipotent and a thousand instances are recorded illustrating the absolute dominance of God's will.

At last the tragic moment arrived when the awful deed must be done and the wretched mariners fearing the immediate engulfing of their ship made a final appeal to Jonah's Lord and besought absolution from the supposed sin of murdering their hapless passenger, attributing the whole transaction to the execution of the divine will, and with sorrowful hearts the awful deed was done, and Jonah passed over the sides of the ship into the sea's remorseless womb. For the present we will draw a veil over the sad, sad scene and meditate on the awful judgments